

CHAPTER 81  
FISHING REGULATIONS

[Prior to 12/31/86, Conservation Commission[290] Ch 108]

**571—81.1(481A) Seasons, territories, daily bag limits, possession limits, and length limits.**

INLAND WATERS OF THE STATE					BOUNDARY RIVERS
KIND OF FISH	OPEN SEASON	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESS-ION LIMIT	MINIMUM LENGTH LIMITS	MISSISSIPPI RIVER MISSOURI RIVER BIG SIOUX RIVER
Rock Sturgeon	Closed	0	0		Same as inland waters
Shovelnose Sturgeon	Continuous	None	None	None	Same as inland waters except no harvest allowed in the Big Sioux River and aggregate daily bag limit 10, aggregate possession limit 20, in the Missouri River
Paddlefish*	Continuous	2	4	None	Same as inland waters
Yellow Perch	Continuous	25	50	None	Same as inland waters except no bag or possession limit in the Missouri River
Trout	Continuous	5	10	None*	Same as inland waters
Catfish*	Continuous	8 Lakes 15 Streams	30	None	Same as inland waters except no bag or possession limit in Mississippi River
Black Bass (Largemouth Bass) (Smallmouth Bass) (Spotted Bass)	Continuous	3 In Aggregate	6	See below*	Continuous open season; aggregate daily bag limit 5, aggregate possession limit 10 See below*
Combined Walleye, Sauger and Saugeye	Continuous*	5*	10*	None*	Continuous open season; aggregate daily bag limit 6, aggregate possession limit 12; except aggregate daily bag limit 4, aggregate possession limit 8, in the Big Sioux and Missouri Rivers See below*

\*Also see 81.2(481A), Exceptions.

INLAND WATERS OF THE STATE					BOUNDARY RIVERS
					Continuous open season; daily bag limit 5, possession limit 10; except daily bag limit 6, possession limit 12, in the Big Sioux River
Northern Pike	Continuous*	3	6	None	
Muskellunge or Hybrid Muskellunge	Continuous*	1	1	40"	Same as inland waters
All other fish species*	Continuous	None	None	None	See below*
Frogs (except Bullfrogs)	Continuous	48	96	None	Same as inland waters
Bullfrogs (Rana Catesbeiana)	Continuous	12	12	None	Same as inland waters

\*Also see 81.2(481A), Exceptions.

**571—81.2(481A) Exceptions to seasons and limits, set in 81.1(481A).**

**81.2(1)** Exception closed season. In Lakes West Okoboji and East Okoboji and Spirit Lake, there shall be a closed season on walleye beginning February 15 each year. The annual opening for walleye in these three lakes shall be the first Saturday in May. In these three lakes there shall be a closed season on muskellunge and tiger muskie beginning December 1 each year. The annual opening for muskellunge and tiger muskie in these three lakes shall be May 21 the following year.

Fishing in any manner is prohibited from December 1 of each year through March 15 the following year in the following areas of the Mississippi River.

- a. From Lock and Dam Number 11 downstream to the railroad bridge near river mile 579.9.
- b. From Lock and Dam Number 12 downstream to the mouth of Mill Creek near river mile 556.
- c. From Lock and Dam Number 13 downstream to the downstream end of Stamp Island near river mile 521.5.

**81.2(2)** Black bass. A 15-inch minimum length limit shall apply on black bass in all public lakes except as otherwise posted. On federal flood control reservoirs, a 15-inch minimum length limit shall apply on black bass at Coralville, Rathbun, Saylorville, and Red Rock. All black bass caught from Lake Wapello, Davis County, and Brown’s Lake, Jackson County, must be immediately released alive. A 22-inch minimum length limit shall apply on black bass in Green Valley Lake, Union County. A 12-inch minimum length limit shall apply on black bass in all interior streams, river impoundments, and the Missouri River including chutes and backwaters of the Missouri River where intermittent or constant flow from the river occurs. A 14-inch minimum length limit shall apply to the Mississippi River including chutes and backwaters where intermittent or constant flow from the river occurs. All black bass caught from the following stream segments must be immediately released alive:

- 1. Middle Raccoon River, Guthrie County, extending downstream from below Lennon Mills Dam at Panora as posted to the dam at Redfield.
- 2. Maquoketa River, Delaware County, extending downstream from below Lake Delhi Dam as posted to the first county gravel road bridge.
- 3. Cedar River, Mitchell County, extending downstream from below the Otranto Dam as posted to the bridge on County Road T26 south of St. Ansgar.
- 4. Upper Iowa River, Winneshiek County, extending downstream from the Fifth Street bridge in Decorah as posted to the Upper Dam.

**81.2(3)** Walleye. A 14-inch minimum length limit shall apply on walleye in Lakes West Okoboji, East Okoboji, Spirit Lake, Upper Gar, Minnewashta, and Lower Gar in Dickinson County, and Clear Lake in Cerro Gordo County. A 15-inch minimum length limit shall apply on walleye in Storm Lake, Buena Vista County, and Big Creek Lake, Polk County. No more than one walleye above 20 inches in length may be taken per day from the above lakes except in Clear Lake and Storm Lake where no more than one walleye above 22 inches in length may be taken per day. A 15-inch minimum length limit shall apply on walleye in Black Hawk Lake, Sac County, and in Viking Lake, Montgomery County. The daily bag limit for walleye in the above lakes shall be three with a possession limit of six. A 15-inch minimum length limit shall apply on walleye in the Mississippi River. All walleye from 20 inches to 27 inches in length that are caught from Mississippi River Pools 12 through 20 must be immediately released alive. No more than one walleye above 27 inches may be taken per day from Pools 12 through 20.

**81.2(4)** Paddlefish snagging is permitted in all waters of the state, except as follows:

*a.* There shall be no open season in the Missouri River and Big Sioux River, nor in any tributary of these streams within 200 yards immediately upstream of its confluence with the Missouri or Big Sioux Rivers.

*b.* Snagging for paddlefish on the Mississippi River is restricted to the area within 500 yards below the navigation dams and their spillways. The open season on the Mississippi River is the period from January 1 through April 15.

*c.* Snagging for paddlefish is not permitted at any time in those areas where snagging is prohibited as a method of take as listed in subrule 81.2(11).

**81.2(5)** Special trout regulations. A 14-inch minimum length limit shall apply on brown trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout in Spring Branch Creek, Delaware County, from the spring source to County Highway D5X as posted, and on brown trout only in portions of Bloody Run Creek, Clayton County, where posted. All trout caught from the posted portion of Waterloo Creek, Allamakee County, Hewitt and Ensign Creeks (Ensign Hollow), Clayton County, McCloud Run, Linn County, and South Pine Creek, Winneshiek County, and all brown trout caught from French Creek, Allamakee County, must be immediately released alive. Fishing in the posted area of Spring Branch Creek, Bloody Run Creek, Waterloo Creek, Hewitt and Ensign Creeks (Ensign Hollow), South Pine Creek, McCloud Run, and French Creek shall be by artificial lure only. Artificial lure means lures that do not contain or have applied to them any natural or synthetic substances designed to attract fish by the sense of taste or smell.

**81.2(6)** Exception border lakes. In Little Spirit Lake, Dickinson County; Iowa and Tuttle (Okamanpedan) Lakes, Emmet County; Burt (Swag) Lake, Kossuth County; and Iowa Lake, Osceola County, the following shall apply:

*a.* Walleye daily bag and possession limit six;

*b.* Northern pike daily bag and possession limit three;

*c.* Largemouth and smallmouth bass daily bag and possession limit six;

*d.* Channel catfish daily bag and possession limit eight. Open season on the above fish shall be the Saturday nearest May 1 to February 15 each year.

*e.* Yellow perch, white bass, and sunfish daily bag and possession limit 30, and crappie daily bag and possession limit 15. There is a continuous open season on these species.

*f.* Spears and bow and arrow may be used to take carp, buffalo, dogfish, gar, sheepshead, and carpsucker from sunrise to sunset during the period from the first Saturday in May to February 15 each year in the above lakes.

**81.2(7)** DeSoto Bend Lake. All fishers shall conform with federal refuge regulations as posted under the authority of Section 33.19 of Title 50 CFR. The text of the rules will be contained on the signs as posted.

**81.2(8)** General restriction. Anglers must comply with the most restrictive set of regulations applicable to the water on which they are fishing. Where length limits apply, fish less than the legal length must be immediately released into the water from which they were caught.

**81.2(9)** Catfish. For the purpose of this rule, stream catfish bag and possession limits apply at the federal flood control impoundments of Rathbun Lake, Red Rock Lake, Saylorville Lake, and Coralville Lake.

**81.2(10)** Identification of catch. No person shall transport or possess on any waters of the state any fish unless (a) the species of any such fish can be readily identified and a portion of the skin (at least 1 square inch) including scales is left on all fish or fillets and (b) the length of fish can be determined when length limits apply. "On any waters of the state" includes from the bank or shoreline in addition to wading and by boat.

**81.2(11)** Method of take. Artificial light may be used in the taking of any fish. The following species of fish may be taken by hand fishing, snagging, spearing, and bow and arrow: common carp, big-head carp, grass carp, silver carp, black carp, bigmouth buffalo, smallmouth buffalo, black buffalo, quillback carpsucker, highfin carpsucker, river carpsucker, spotted sucker, white sucker, shorthead redhorse, golden redhorse, silver redhorse, sheepshead, shortnose gar, longnose gar, dogfish, gizzard shad, and goldfish. All other species of fish not hooked in the mouth, except paddlefish legally taken by snagging, must be returned to the water immediately with as little injury as possible. A fish is foul hooked when caught by a hook in an area other than in the fish's mouth. Snagging is defined as the practice of jerking any type of hook or lure, baited or unbaited, through the water with the intention of foul hooking fish. Exceptions to snagging as a method of take are as follows:

No snagging is permitted in the following areas:

1. Des Moines River from directly below Saylorville Dam to the Southeast 14th Street bridge in Des Moines.
2. Cedar River in Cedar Rapids from directly below the 5 in 1 Dam under I-380 to the 1st Avenue bridge.
3. Cedar River in Cedar Rapids from directly below the "C" Street Roller Dam to 300 yards downstream.
4. Iowa River from directly below the Coralville Dam to 300 yards downstream.
5. Chariton River from directly below Lake Rathbun Dam to 300 yards downstream.
6. Spillway area from directly below the Spirit Lake outlet to the confluence at East Okoboji Lake.
7. Northeast bank of the Des Moines River from directly below the Ottumwa Dam, including the catwalk, to the Jefferson Street Bridge. Snagging from the South Market Street Bridge is also prohibited.
8. Missouri River and the Big Sioux River from the I-29 bridge to the confluence with the Missouri River.

**81.2(12)** All other fish species.

*a. Hybrid striped bass.* The daily bag and possession limit for hybrid striped bass (wipers) in Big Creek Lake, Polk County, shall be three and six respectively. The minimum size limit for hybrid striped bass shall be 18 inches.

*b. Panfish.* In all waters of the Mississippi River, the daily bag and possession limit applied individually to crappie, yellow perch and rock bass shall be 25 and 50, respectively. In all waters of the Mississippi River, the daily bag and possession limit applied in the aggregate for bluegill and pumpkinseed and for white bass and yellow bass shall be 25 and 50, respectively.

**81.2(13)** *Culling.* It is prohibited to sort, cull, high-grade, or replace any fish already in possession. Participants in permitted black bass tournaments are exempted. Any fish taken into possession by holding in a live well, on a stringer or in other fish-holding devices is part of the daily bag limit. Once the daily bag limit of a particular species is reached, fishing for that species is permitted as long as all fish of that species caught are immediately released.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 481A.38, 481A.39, 481A.67 and 481A.76.

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